2: Pálóczy-Horváth
175,●566

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[For an account of the social history of Hungary from the ninth to the twentieth century, see category 116, pp. 36-97]

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free institutions, makes it clear that the traditions of the West have a permanent place in Hungarian life. Yesterday the West was Germany. To-morrow it will be England. She has become our nearest Western friend in a shrinking world. The Battle of Britain was also fought for liberty on the Danube.

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●566 When surveying Hungary's history, the reader must bear in mind her peculiar characteristics. The archaic social structure of the country has been preserved intact throughout the centuries, thus leaving the power in the hands of a small minority of nobles. The autonomy of the counties and their ancient hierarchy reinforced such a development. This unfortunate feature was only aggravated by the fact that, during the century and a half which witnessed vast progress in nearly all the European countries that benefited from the influence of Humanism, the Renaissance and the Reformation, Hungary, with an almost fossilised social structure, lay buried under the Turkish occupation. Apart from the brilliant episode of Matthias Corvinus, the Renaissance hardly touched the country, and ironically enough it was not so much the Reformation as the officially fostered Counter-Reformation which left its mark on the intellectual life of the Magyars. When Hungary re-emerged at the end of the seventeenth century her social structure was that of the fifteenth century. It might be said that what the Thirty Years' War was to Germany, the 150 years of Turkish occupation were to Hungary.

[671] Hungarian Law, as codified in the sixteenth century, has been based throughout on the Tripartite Code of Werbőczi, published in 1525, which in its turn was largely inspired by reaction to the peasant revolt, bloodily suppressed in 1514. It divided the Hungarian people into the castes of big and small nobility, with the clergy on the one hand, the plebs on the other. This fatal cleavage in the Hungarian social structure stamped its mark on centuries of history, and made the anti-democratic orientation a fundamental trait of Hungarian politics. This semi-feudal character of Hungarian society, occasionally tinted as it was with theocratic colours, represented a cul-de-sac of all Hungarian ccc endeavours. Mr. Pálóczy's vivid description of the relationship between master and serf is by no means an overstatement or exaggeration. I myself, who was brought up to be one of these masters, must blush at the way my own experiences confirm Mr. Pálóczy's description—experiences which induced me to leave that medieval atmosphere of feudal privilege.

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The book puts its finger on the crucial point of modern Hungar-

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ian history in laying bare the roots of the catastrophe which overtook the country in 1918, and which, in almost identical form, has overwhelmed her again. Freeing history of its romantic trappings, the author reveals the real cause of these tragic events in the German orientation of Hungary's foreign policy and in the semi-feudal structure of her society. These two factors were, indeed, indissolubly linked. For without the help of the Germans it would have been impossible for Hungary's lords to maintain their anachronistic rule in modern times. No deeper insight into the natural history of the Hungarian oligarchy is possible.

The German connection is, of course, almost as old as Hungary herself. Ever since St. Stephen's time she has sought and found in the German world a welcome addition, if not a counter-weight, to the masses of her partly Slavonic subjects. This fact, as well as the frequent settlement of Germans in Hungary, served, in our epoch, as the stepping-stones of German power policy in that country.

After 1526, the contact became closer with the appearance of the Habsburgs on the Hungarian political scene. The otherwise risky method of marriage paid the Habsburgs well. However, for another 150 years the Turks disputed the new acquisition by occupying the greater part of Hungary, and making Transylvania tributary to themselves.

Hungary was now engaged in a fight on two fronts, against the Turks and the Habsburgs. Such a situation lent itself to much contradictory adulation on the part of later historians. While Hungary's struggle against the Turks was presented as a crusade in defence of Christian civilisation, her intermittent fights against the Habsburgs were similarly idealised, although they happened to be fought in military alliance with the self-same Turks, against whom at other times the alleged crusade was being waged. Dr. Goebbels was not the only propagandist who trod on his own toes.

Actually, victories over the Habsburgs were victories for feudalism. Three times Hungary made a solemn compact with the Habsburg dynasty, and on each occasion the big landowners gained some special privilege in exchange for the concessions made to the throne. In 1687, the Crown of St, Stephen was declared to be hereditary in the male line of the Habsburgs; the same Diet did not fail to enact the privilege of *fidei commissa* in favour of the Magyar peers of the realm. In 1723, the succession was extended to the female line; simultaneously, the right of entail was extended to the rest of the aristocracy. After 1867, when the famous "Compromise" drew the bonds between Hun-

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175 gary and Austria even closer, an Order in Council made the laws
566 on *fidei commissa* more effective. The Magyar oligarchy made nationalism pay. They never regarded Hungary as safe, unless they could feel sure of their dominion over the peasants. This was evident during the rule of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, whose enlightened absolutism was particularly against their interests.

The failure of the Josephinean experiment in Hungary is pregnant with significance. Joseph II introduced reforms as radical as those subsequently proposed and carried into effect by the Assemblies of the French Revolution. Serfdom was abolished and many aristocratic prerogatives were annulled once and for all. These daring innovations mark him out as one of the outstanding benefactors of mankind. He might have been wholly successful, but for the fact that his centralised method of administration involved the official use of *one* single language in his multilingual Empire. And the Emperor, though averse to nationalism in all its forms, for purely practical reasons chose German as the new *lingua franca* of the reformed Empire. This psychological blunder was to prove fatal to his plans. The common people of Hungary, who knew no Latin and cherished their native tongue, resented what they took to be the Emperor's attempt at deliberate Germanisation. Their genuinely patriotic sentiments were cleverly echoed by the nobility, who appeared to embrace the cause of the people while actually launching against the crowned reformer a political campaign in defence of their prerogatives. They were but little concerned with the Magyar tongue, which many of them did not even understand. The reactionary campaign was successful, and the Emperor on his death-bed had to withdraw the reforms.

In the fateful year 1848 the Hungarian aristocracy was split into two camps, the pro-Habsburgs and the Liberals. The Liberal aristocrats rallied behind the enlightened conservatism of Széchenyi and, eventually, even behind the radical Kossuth when they realised that the appeal of Liberal principles was too strong to be disregarded. They hoped, however, to act as a brake on the demagogic drive of Kossuth. To a certain extent they were successful in this. On the home front, so far as his attitude towards the nationalities was concerned, Kossuth's liberalism was of course strictly limited. This, ultimately, caused the downfall of the
000 revolution. Our author, in his description of Kossuth's rôle in the 1848 revolution, seems to disregard the fact that Kossuth, in 1848, roundly refused the offer of collaboration extended to him by the representatives of the various nationalities. It was only at the eleventh hour, when the failure of the revolution appeared unavoidable, that he changed his attitude. For the rest of his life,

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it is true, he remained an advocate of a Danubian Confederation an idea of great promise, as we shall see. Mr. Pálóczy maintains that it was the influence of the Hungarian gentry and aristocrats that prevented the co-operation between the Magyars and the Slovaks, Rumanians and Croats. It would be idle to deny that such influences may have affected Kossuth, but, on the other hand, he was in full possession of power and there is ample evidence of his non-co-operative attitude.

The turning point of Hungarian history was 1867. Francis Joseph was obliged, after the defeat of 1866 at the hands of Prussia, to come to an understanding with Hungary. This understanding became known as the "Compromise". It was not an understanding between the Hungarian and Austrian peoples, but between the Hungarian nobility and the Emperor Francis Joseph. It implied the domination of all the nationalities of the Empire by the small minority of German-Austrians in Austria and of the Magyars in Hungary. In other words, it aimed at the rule of a minority and thus was essentially anti-democratic. Eventually, the national aspirations of the various nationalities within the Dual-Monarchy became the embodiment of democratic opposition. Since oppression, whether national or social, is always anti-democratic, the nationality question and the social questions inevitably remained closely connected. This fatal interdependence led to the blind alley which made the disruption of the Dual Monarchy inevitable. For the only possible way out would have been the self-transformation of the Dual-Monarchy into a federation of all its nationalities. But in this case the preponderance of the Slav element, by virtue of its numerical superiority, would have been unavoidable. This very possibility induced the Hungarian nobility, as well as the Germans in Berlin, to do their utmost to prevent federalism. The former would have lost their commanding position within an archaic social structure, and the latter a bridgehead in their "Drang nach Osten". By means of this so-called "Compromise" German diplomacy secured another safety-valve against any federalistic possibility in the form of the Triple Alliance. This alliance—which, in fact, was really a dual alliance between Berlin and Vienna, with Italy playing only a secondary rôle—soon degenerated into an alliance between the Berlin imperialists and the nobility in Budapest. Their interests remained identical right up to the outbreak of the First World War, and this should explain why Hungary was so faithful an ally of Germany between 1914 and 1918. Nothing could be more illustrative of the static character of Hungarian social politics between the two World Wars than the fact that

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175 almost the same motives induced Hungary to be a similarly faith-
566 ful ally of Nazi Germany in the present war.

The analogy is indeed striking. Three times within three-quarters of a century Hungarian feudalism has linked its fate with Germany. First, in 1867, when Prussia's victory over Austria enabled the Hungarian aristocracy to force a favourable compromise on the Emperor. This compromise served the double purpose of saving their prerogatives from encroachment by a dynasty which was threatening to become an ally of the villeins against their masters. and, at the same time, of ensuring their hegemony over the non-Magyar races of Hungary. It was at the bidding of the Magyar leaders of the Dual-Monarchy that the Alliance of Vienna with Berlin was engineered by Andrássy. Secondly, in 1914, when the achievement of 1867 was put to the test of history. For half a century the Magyar lords had maintained their rule over the Magyar people intact by refusing them democratic rights under the pretence that if they had such rights it would endanger "the Magyar character of the country". Such a rule of oppression could not fail to antagonise the non-Magyar peoples inside and outside the country. The bullets of Sarajevo were directed against a system the seat of which was in Budapest, and which naturally looked for protection to Berlin once it realised that the war was inevitable. The self-same Count Tisza who vainly attempted to decline responsibility for the declaration of war, became the *jusqu'au boutiste* of Berlin imperialism in his endeavour to maintain the social and national domination of his class. After the defeat of 1918, as we shall see, the forces of democracy were soon thrust aside and saddled with the responsibility for the consequences of a lost war, which had been the logical outcome of the policies of reactionary feudalists. Nevertheless these self-same classes assumed power and embarked on policies which inevitably led to a new war on Germany's side. For what else was *revisionism* but the continuation of an old policy under changed conditions? Hungary's lords now wished to regain the estates which they had not succeeded in holding, and wanted to re-establish the dominance over the non-Magyar
175 races which they had failed to maintain. While pretending to strive merely for a correction of the boundary line, they were actually engaged in an agitation to recover their lost frontiers. More than ever they had to seek the alliance of an imperialist Power which was hostile to the Slav peoples and which approved of their reactionary social regime. Nazi Germany thus offered as the ideal partner in the traditional scheme. Even before Hungary actually entered the war on the side of Berlin, revision-

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CHAPTER I

WE ARE to be punished again. We are used to being punished. The first punishment which we remember was many hundred years ago, when Attila, the great lord of the Huns, started his big drive and took us away from our homes in Central Asia to become the baggage-carrying slaves of his huge armada.

You know Attila's story. You don't know ours. The lords did not tell you. Anyway, we were the slaves of Attila. We carried the weapons, the food, the tents. You know how Attila dealt with people who had weapons and could defend themselves. Now you can imagine how he dealt with us.

We lost our homes in Central Asia. We lost our gods. We lost everything save our Magyar language. This was the language of the slaves.

We were slaves. Later we became serfs. Now we are the "people". We still have nothing save our Magyar language. We kept that, and our lords took it over.

Of course this was not so simple. We had to keep silence a lot. We are silent people. Servants have to be. But perhaps we can thank our quiet and silent nature that we were not massacred with our lords, the Huns and Avars, and that later, when the proud and tough fighters of Arpad—the first Hungarian Prince—appeared in 896 in the lands below the Karpat range, they took a liking to us and adopted our language. This often happens. The proud invaders take over the language of the invaded.

But in this case our fight for our language was not over. The great king St. Stephen, who was the first Christian king of our land, turned Hungary into a Christian, and not a national, country. The language of St. Stephen's Hungary was Latin. Our lords spoke Latin till 1830. Magyar was the language of the slaves. Half the land belonged to St. Stephen, the other half belonged to 120 lords and the Catholic Church. Our lords liked the German Catholic priests, who undertook to explain to us that it was worth while to drudge and want, for we should get all the riches in the hereafter.

We lived on the *pusztas* of our lords.

You have naturally heard about the Hungarian *puszta*. You have heard about a great plain where picturesquely dressed horsemen lead a happy life, the mirage is beautiful, and food is

666 plentiful. This is not our *puszta*. We mean quite a different
423 thing by it. There are the huge estates in the country of our lords. In the centre is the big manor-house with the great park. Behind the park are the houses of the overseers, then the big, beautiful stables and pigsties. Then come our huts—one-room huts, where generally two families live. Occasionally, when a pigsty is too old to be used, then we may get it, so that sometimes every family has a room of its own. This is good, for it is very difficult for more than ten people to live in the same hut. The women-folk quarrel. There are difficulties.

361 Well, anyhow, the complex of our huts, behind the park of the lord in the centre of the huge estate, is the *puszta*—our *puszta*. It is very far away from the villages where the free people live in well-ordered rows of houses. These villages are splendid and interesting places; they have shops, and people can even buy
ooo matches if they have the money. We borrow our fires from the upper-class people—let's say from the honourable wife of the estate-smith, if she is in a good mood.

We are not interesting people, we servants of the *puszta*. We
[423] do not know our number. But, as half the country of our lords belongs to big estates, you can imagine that we are many.

Sometimes we see picture books which one of the bright *puszta*-lads gets from the manor. There are books about the savages of Africa. There are no books about us.

Perhaps you will not mind if, before going on with our story, we tell you how we live now. We are so eager to talk, you know, if we think that someone may care to listen. Of course we complain. This is our fault. Serfs do complain if they are listened to. But perhaps it is worth your while to listen. Our life is quite as "quaint" and "different" as that of the New Guinea people.

512 Generally we get up at three o'clock in the morning. This is good, for at harvest-time we have to start work an hour earlier. There is, of course, always a great deal of work on the *puszta*. There are lots of animals: cows, oxen, horses, sheep, pigs, chickens. The stables and pigsties have to be cleaned, the big carts filled with manure, the cows fed and milked. Then,
[262] about half-past five in the morning, we can have our breakfast. In good times we have some warm soup—"lebbencs" soup. This is delicious. For a family of five you take an onion and a spoonful of pork-fat and cook it and throw in it little pieces of wheat-flakes. In every plate you get three, or even four, pieces of these flakes. But lebbencs-soup is quite exceptional. Generally we eat a chunk of bread, as big as our fist.

517 chiefly history books, if we can get them. Books are treasures.
212 Generally the children get them from people who are interested in us. There are students in Budapest who sometimes organise libraries on wheels. Last year this library let us have a book by Tolstoy for a week—*War and Peace*. We could not read the whole of it. We gathered in Uncle Andras's house, all the adult population of our cluster of huts, and we took turns reading aloud. It was winter, and we read four hours every evening, so that we had only three and a half hours' sleep. It was wonderful. We asked the students to send us a book about our history, so that we should be able to keep it. They sent it to Uncle Andras. He had to go a long way for it—to the village post office. But they did not give him the book, but told him to go to the gendarmerie. There they boxed his ears and hit his feet with sticks. "This is to teach you not to ask for books from the city, you old socialist swine." So, you see, it is quite difficult to get books.

517 Mostly we have no oil for our lamps. So we just talk. Old people talk about their grandfathers and great-grandfathers. They generally begin like this: "He was a very poor man, grandfather Janos was, rest his soul", as if it were an unusual thing to be very poor.

We talk. The young folk play around a bit; they go walking
837 or sing for themselves. There are always a few young men about
●566 who are sulking because their girl is being "used" in the manor or by someone belonging to the estate-management staff.

Because the fact is that our women-folk *are* "used" by our lords, estate-managers, their assistants, and even by the overseers. We belong to them, don't we? It is quite natural that if they want to use our girls they simply say, "You, Julcsa or Terka, come round this evening." And they naturally go. Some young estate assistants are nice about it and say, "Come in, Julcsa, to darn my socks"; but they generally simply tell them to come in.

The girls don't talk about this. They get some wine and sometimes a piece of bacon. Next day they are tired. But they work just the same. If they are a bit slack, the assistant rebukes them: "Do you think you can be slack just because I used you last night?" Then the girl blushes. So they work even harder next day so as not to be shamed.

566 Well, after dinner we live our private life. Let us suppose that
135 it is summer. Harvest time. The *puszta* is quite lively. The landworkers are here. We, the serf-servants, are not enough to do the harvest, so every spring the bailiff of our lord goes away to hire harvest gangs.

He goes to far-away places, to the east and north of the country

of our lords. (We, the serf-servants, live mostly in the western half of Hungary, the country of huge estates.) 5610 735

He goes away—goes from village to village and looks over the harvest-gangs. In the spring the land-workers are a pretty poor lot. They eat up everything they have made during the previous season. They live on the outskirts of villages, in huts for which they have to pay money. They are pretty weak by the spring. Some of them are so desperate that they even spend the contract-money, which is dangerous for them. For it is the custom, when the harvest gang makes a contract, for every person to put two to five *pengœs* into his labour book. This money belongs to the bailiff. Most bailiffs don't take on people who give them no money. Or, if they are lucky, the bailiff gives them an advance on their wages so that they can pay him his money.

So the harvest-gang are here. They have just arrived to-day. First they get a month's pay in advance. This they send home immediately, so that their families shall have something to eat. They generally ask for the second month's advance too, so that they can eat. And then they *do* eat. They sit in the stable of the oxen, which is their home while they are with us. The *csiras* take the oxen to their summer home in the distant fields, and the harvesters get their place. They sit in the huge stable on their bunks of straw and eat. For this first evening the estate generally provides a few candlesticks so that they can see and get accustomed to finding their bunks in the dark. We of the *puszta* stand in the doorway and look on while they eat.

The harvest-gangs which visit us differ greatly. Some of them are a lively, light-hearted lot—the harvesters are always young people—some of them are grim and serious. But they are all lean and starved-out.

As we look at them eating, we remember the poems of our great poet, Sandor Petöfi, about the dogs and the wolves. The dogs are whipped by their masters, they are kicked about, they never have a minute to rest, they are not free, but they always have somewhere to sleep, and their masters throw them some food. The wolves are haunted by cold and starvation, but they are free.

We, the serf-servants, are the dogs. The land-workers are the wolves. And now these young wolves eat.

The stable is divided into the men's part and the women's part. There is a law about the duty of the estates to provide separate quarters for men and women. So the bailiff puts a wooden board at the entrance to the stable with the legend: "Men to the right, women to the left".

school-teachers sent reports to Budapest about this. They said they could not teach tipsy children. In reality they were angry because the children could not work for them. Teachers are paid by the State. They get very little. But they all have a garden or a small bit of land. And the children work in their garden or on their land. While the first grade has a lesson, let us say, the second, third and fourth grades work in the garden, help in the kitchen to peel potatoes, draw water from the fountain, feed the animals, and so on. They are at school all day. It is a welcome change for them to do work to which they are used half the time.

But they were constantly tipsy, and the teachers got angry. There was a great commotion about this. A committee went to investigate, newspapers wrote about it and some socialist even spoke about it in Parliament. This lasted two months. The children still had their wine-breakfast. Then harvest-time came. So the question was solved. The Parliament went on to more important work—to pass laws, for instance, on how to take away the possessions of Jewish lords and give them to non-Jewish lords. As a general rule they often passed laws about the Jews. First we thought that it would be a good thing. Our district had no Jews. So we thought it was only to give us some Jews too, because the Jews are very good at buying and selling. In other districts, where there are Jews, they come with enormous packs on their backs, full of stuff, and they sell us ribbons, kerchiefs, needles, wool, for eggs, or whatever we have. But it turned out that it was not this kind of law. It was just the business of rich Jews and rich Christians.

The law was hard on poor Jews and some horses. It turned out that there are Jews among the horses too. A horse is a Jew if its owner had more than two Jewish grandparents. And according to one of the new laws a Jewish horse is forbidden to procreate. In Hungary the procreation of horses is under State control. This was tough on some horses.

Nowadays we don't get many foreigners. Before 1914 many of the harvest-gangs were Rumanian or Slovak or Ukrainian. Our lords brought them from distant places so as to make sure that the harvesters couldn't desert if the work was too hard for them. The land-workers of our district, on the other hand, had to go to far-away places. They went as unskilled labourers in the cities; they went to work on railway lines.

A serf in the region where he was born, where he knows the language, is a more daring person than in some foreign part where he knows nothing. So our lords—if they can—mix us up.

●566 They have done this for the last thousand years—as you will see from our story. They chased out the Magyar serfs to Rumania and took in the Rumanian serfs who were chased out by their lords. And now they—both our own and the Rumanian lords—are angry because they have hopelessly mixed up the population of Transylvania. Well, you can't eat your cake and have it.

They wanted cheap, frightened, docile serfs. They got them. But they also want big countries, so as to get a lot of taxes from us and be very important. But having mixed us up, they cannot decide which of them ought to have the bigger State.

There is an old man on our *puszta* who says that our lords won't have to worry a lot. They will create many more States. You know, separate countries. They go in for this State business because that means many good jobs for them.

COO Our old people tell us a lot about the period before the first big war of our lords. They tell us about when some Rumanian and Slovak workers started to sing their songs. We liked them. They were similar to our tunes. So we sang them with the foreigners and then taught them our songs. It seems that the bailiff heard about this and came to tell us that the dirty Rumanians and Slovaks had stolen our songs. We thought that you could not steal songs. They are there for your liking. We felt proud that they had taken over our tunes.

But some of the younger lads started to argue next day about this song business.

"Look here, Juon," they said to a Rumanian who had learnt our language in the army of our lords—"look here, Juon," they said, "after all, you are singing our songs." They started to argue, then took out their knives. A general fight followed. Three were killed, and two of our lads and a Rumanian were hanged for it.

After this happened we were sad. For when we come to think of it, the fact that we have similar tunes probably means that we are similar. We ought to be friends. They are just like ordinary folk. They work from dawn to dusk, as we do. Their women give birth to their children on the field, as ours do, working till the last minute and only going home after the little one is crying there next to them. They have just as little weight on their bodies as we have.

But we are foolish. We soon forget. If our lords start one of their wars, we soon get as mad at their enemies as they are.

We know that you don't like small people who pretend to be very proud of their countries. Please understand that we are not like this. We know well enough that the country of our lords is

The peasants, who are even more eager than we to buy, fret a lot because of this. If we were to have the money, we could go anywhere to buy. Let's say to some distant part where a lord had too many expensive sweethearts in Budapest and has to sell. But the peasants already have some land. They would like to get more next to their piece or in the same neighbourhood. But the lords will not sell. In such parts the peasants have only one child. This is called the "Egyke" custom: the "one-liness". Our peasants learned this from German peasants, to whom our lords sold some land in the south-western part of our country. These peasants have only one child. The rest they "make-away", as they say. They don't want their land to become tinier and tinier bits because of the children. After one child the peasant-women go to the "old one" of the village. This is always a wise old woman. She helps them to "make the child away". The peasant-women in the districts where "one-liness" is a custom are mostly bad-tempered. They nag their men. They have much lust in their bodies. The carryings on in those villages! The luxury! The food! They eat meat every day. They have silk dresses. We are, of course, mostly barefooted. Some of us never have boots on our feet, except when we are in the army. The better off among us have boots. Of course they never wear them for work. If they have to go to the court, or sometimes if they go to the village to church, they proudly carry them on their shoulders, and before arriving in the city or village they put them on. You can save them for your son this way. And it is a proud feeling indeed to leave your son boots which he can put on when he grows up.

Oh, yes. The harvesters are here. Some of us stand about the stables and get acquainted. Others sit in front of the huts and talk. We talk a lot about our own affairs. Who has two hens, whose son has become a gentleman and sends some money home. And so on.

Our conditions have not changed very much since 1867. They were the same before the first big war of our lords, and they are the same now. A serf-servant on our *pusztas* gets twelve to forty *pengœs* a year. This is about ten to thirty shillings in your money. So the cash an average *puszta* family gets a year is never less than ten shillings and never more than thirty. In addition, we get 1200 pounds of wheat, 1000 pounds of rye and 1000 pounds of barley. We have the right to keep poultry about the house, but for every hen we have to give five eggs a year to the estate. We—a family of five or six or seven—are entitled, moreover, to 300 standard square feet of garden and 1600

511 standard square of maize or potato field. But the garden and
566 this bit of field must be worked by the women and children. The men must work for the estate.

This does not mean very much to you. But during the present war you have learnt what rationing means. So you will know how we live if we tell you that from all this an average family has one-third of a pound of bread as its daily ration and a sixth of a pound of "*tészta*", which is something like noodles. The potato ration is about two potatoes a day for the whole family. In addition to this we can sometimes eat some onions and green paprika. We still cannot afford, of course, to eat the war-time bread-ration of our lords, which is half a pound a day.

Some students and writers who made a study of our lives, as Englishmen study savages, have calculated that if we take into account everything we get—money, food, the value of our huts and so on—then our daily income is between a penny and two-pence. And for this we work never less than fourteen, and mostly sixteen to eighteen, and during harvest even twenty, hours a day. Before the war, when some of us agitated for a law saying that we should not work more than twelve hours, the gendarmes interfered, and there was shooting. We will tell you about this later.

000 One of us who was educated and became a writer told us a funny thing. He said that gentlemen of enormous learning in the West complained that the world of today cannot get information about the daily life of the workers in the Dark Ages. How amusing! They should come and visit our *pusztas*. Most maps say that we are in Central Europe. Anyhow, nothing has changed here. Our huts are the same as they were a thousand years ago. The laws are the same.

In the Chapel of the Manor there is a picture of the Day of Judgement. In the top corner of the picture there are angels in great splendour, and below—everywhere—in deep darkness there are the struggling masses to be judged. If you want to understand what it felt like to be the masses in the Dark Ages or what it feels like to be us, you should think about this picture. Sharp brilliance, splendour, richness, joy in the tiny bit at the top; darkness and misery for the huge masses below.

It may be that you are not prepared to believe what we have already told and are going to tell you. Do you think we should have the impudence to lie to you? Do you think we should dare to send out our cry to you, hoping for help, if we did not know that the truth is with us?

about the reign of his own kind, of his own nation. "His own kind" were the lords anyway, and there were no "lords" in this sense among the Magyars. So he founded the great Christian country, which was ruled by him, by foreign nobles and priests.

It took him and his successors more than a century to transform us into Christian serfs. We fought, too. We captured a German bishop, St. Gellert, put him into a barrel and kicked him down a mountain-side. The mountain bears his name to this day. We had many revolts. But great numbers of Bavarian soldiers came, and we were finally beaten. In our homes we clung for centuries to our old beliefs. But the countryside which was easily accessible to lord and priest became Christian. Our lords learnt Latin, and that was their language till 1830. "Magyar" was the language of the scum, of the people.

But our lot in those times was much better than it is today. This is not just the talk of the old ones who always think that ancient times were better times. No, our lot was better because there was more food, we had to work shorter hours and the tenants were mostly free to move. We had to give one seventh or ninth of the crop to the lords, one ninth to the Church, one tenth to the King. The rest was ours. We ate meat quite often. We were permitted to catch fish, and to shoot hares and other game with our arrows. If we were shepherds we were permitted to keep the sheep's milk and cheese because our foreign lords thought them uneatable, the food of serfs. Now they know better.

But more and more foreign priests and nuns came. Germans came to help the King to run the country. Though the country was very big, many of us could not get tenancy, and lived beyond the marshland, hunting and fishing.

On the big estates many *pusztas* were formed, and life on them soon became somewhat similar to our life today. The priests showed the lords how to treat us. They held their estates only for their lifetime. This was bad. Imagine that you become a bishop after being a hungry sort of a priest for many decades. Now you have got your big estate. Well, quite naturally you are eager to make the most of it—more eager than the lords who know that after them their sons will enjoy the estate. So the bishops made life a bit tougher for us. The estates belonging to the monasteries were no better. Students who visit us speak about a curious document dating from the twelfth century—a sort of accounts book of a monastery which had fifty-seven villages. There are some estate serfs mentioned. They had such names as Donkey, Stinky, Sleepy, Lazy, Filth, Ox and so on. Our lords and the priests gave us these names instead of our